

CHRISTCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Christchurch Parish Council held in the Community Centre on Monday 9 June 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs A Sparrow (Chairman), J Bliss, B Burfield, R Feeney, J Hughes, S Potter, Cllrs S Fisher (CCC), C Galbraith (CCC), D Roy (FDC), D Gibbs (Clerk), two parishioners

025/25-26 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs J Hayes, M Summers (FDC)

026/25-26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

027/25-26 Public Time

Cllr Hughes mentioned that residents had reported hedges and trees overhanging and blocking pavements in Church Road, Wayside Estate and Crown Road. The Clerk will investigate the hedges and Cllr Burfield will inspect the trees in Crown Road.

It was noted that the large tyre dumped in Halfpenny Toll Road last year has been removed, apparently by the District Council.

028/25-26 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 12 May were correctly recorded and signed as being a true record.

029/25-26 Matters Outstanding

- a) Household items outside property in Upwell Road - Cllr Roy and the Clerk met with Rachael Nicholls from Clarion Housing Group to discuss the issues and future use of the site. As the tenants have no use for the plot, it was agreed that Clarion would create an easy-maintenance shared public space to be managed jointly with the Council.
- b) Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan - The Clerk is awaiting a response from the Clerk of Manea Parish Council.
- c) Public defibrillators - Cllr Feeney reported that he believes that the Dun Cow defibrillator has been registered on The Circuit. Cllr Burfield reported that the Townley School defibrillator was supplied by the Ambulance Service for specific pupils and is not available for public use. At the last meeting, Cllr Hayes offered to investigate the possibility of connecting the Farmer's Boy defibrillator to a power supply. Cllr Sparrow will clarify whether any progress has been made. Cllr Bliss asked who was responsible for the maintenance of the defibrillators. The Clerk advised Members that the defibrillators were not provided by the Council, but that it was important to ensure that they were always available and ready for use, so if nobody else was undertaking this role, the Council could do so.
- d) Community Centre valuation - The Clerk has found a company able to provide a full valuation remotely, based upon information supplied by the Council. He has asked for a quote for this service for comparison with a conventional survey from a local surveyor.

030/25-26 Police Report

The Clerk reported that he hopes to meet Sergeant Lee Lombardo soon.

031/25-26 County & District Councillors Reports

Cllr Fisher introduced himself and reported that he has arranged a monthly meeting with Highways officers to monitor progress in addressing maintenance issues.

Cllr Galbraith introduced himself and explained that he is a member of the County Council's Highways and Transport Committee. He is keen to work on residents' issues and concerns.

Cllr Roy commented that Clarion intended to clear the site in Upwell Road within the next few weeks and he would be keeping an eye on it to ensure that they do. The latest meeting of the District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Diagnostics Centre at the North Cambs Hospital. The District Council is pushing for more services to be introduced and a lack of awareness about the facility was noted, even amongst local doctors. At the same meeting, Inspector Basford from Cambridgeshire Police confirmed that speed camera vans are now available for local communities, but only where Speed Watch data shows a need. There is currently no Speed Watch group in Christchurch. Cllr Hughes will download data from the MVAS machine for discussion at a future meeting. Finally, he encouraged those present to join Neighbourhood Watch, if they hadn't already done so, as membership brings many benefits, including discounted premiums from some insurers.

032/25-26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including a County Council public rights of way hierarchy consultation, the launch of the Tiger 7 bus route, and a Cambridgeshire ACRE online cancer awareness session.

033/25-26 Members and Residents Issues

- a) Unsupervised dogs - The Clerk reported that a member of the public had contacted him regarding unsupervised dogs behaving aggressively towards their dog. The Clerk had advised the resident to report the incident to the Police, but it was not clear whether or not this had happened. Members discussed the situation and agreed to provide relevant information on the Council's Facebook page. Cllr Feeney will collate this.
- b) Burst water main in Church Road - Members discussed the recent issue that had caused flooding in several gardens. Members had attended the incident to assist, but Anglian Water turned off the supply promptly. It is unclear whether any of the adjoining properties experienced water ingress.
- c) Roadside verge cutting - The Clerk reported that he had tried to ascertain when the verges were due to be cut, but information from Highways was sketchy and confusing.
- d) Communications - Cllr Feeney reported that he and Cllr Hayes had attended the recent Car Show on behalf of the Council. Public engagement was limited. He offered to prepare a slideshow of the Council's activities and achievements to be used at future events.
- e) Annual report to residents - Members agreed to include a report in the August edition of The Heron. Cllr Hughes will prepare the report.
- f) The Chairman expressed his thanks to John Scott and Son for cutting the verge at the top of Padgetts Road.

034/25-26 Recreation Ground

Cllr Burfield reported that the Community Service Payback teams have completed their work in the Recreation Ground and are now working in the Community Centre Car Park.

035/25-26 Nature Park Project

Cllr Burfield reported that he has mowed the dog run but this had resulted in damage to the mower due to the rough ground. Cllr Sparrow thanked Cllr Burfield for his assistance in maintaining the dog run. Members discussed the damage to the mower and agreed to cover the cost of the repair, amounting to £105.56.

Cllr Sparrow noted that the field is once again overgrown and needs immediate treatment, especially with black grass close to the adjoining field of barley. He has obtained a quote for flailing the field, amounting to £350, with a further £805 for spraying. The contractor expressed concern about the presence of a large quantity of branches from the pollarding of the willows. These could be chipped to be used as mulch along the hedge at a cost of £320. Members considered the three elements and resolved to proceed with all three at a total cost of £1,475.

The Clerk reported that the grant payment from the Whitemill Environment Fund has not been received.

036/25-26 Village Centre Regeneration Project

Cllr Sparrow has prepared an initial project plan. Members will discuss this in detail at the next meeting.

037/25-26 Highways

- a) The Clerk informed members that the closure of the Sixteen Foot Bank is now scheduled for 18 and 19 August for the installation of the new signs and lines included in the 2024/25 Local Highway Improvements application.
- b) The Clerk updated Members on the progress of the 2025/26 Local Highway improvement application for Wayside Estate. The project will be presented to the assessment panel on Friday 25 July. The panel's scoring will be presented to the County Council's Highways and Transport Committee on 14 October for confirmation of funding.

038/25-26 Play Equipment Inspection

Members discussed the report on the inspection undertaken by Online Playgrounds on 16 April. Whilst there is no provision in the budget for works in the current year, it was agreed that there are a number of minor items that could be completed immediately.

Members agreed the following actions:-

- i) Roundabout - obtain quote for replacement of rotten wooden sections and two seats
- ii) Swing seats - obtain quote to replace two cradle seats
- iii) Activity trail - remove rotten element
- iv) Soft play surface - make provision in 2026/27 budget for replacement
- v) All equipment - obtain quote for jet washing where required
- vi) Uneven ground and trip hazards in fenced area - infill with clean soil and reseed
- vii) Skatepark ramps - treat rust and repaint
- viii) Teen shelter - treat rust and repaint
- ix) All equipment including outdoor gym - obtain quote for replacement of missing caps and tightening of loose bolts/fixings etc.

039/25-26 Whitemill Environment Fund

The Clerk explained that the District Council is looking for members for a new community panel to promote the availability of funding and to consider applications. Cllr Potter offered to represent the Council on the new panel. The Clerk will notify the District Council.

040/25-26 Fens Reservoir

Members considered a letter from Manea Parish Council proposing a collective response to the Reservoir project. They agreed to join with neighbouring Councils and Cllr Feeney offered to represent the Council on a joint working party for this purpose.

041/25-26 Planning

a) Members considered the following application:

F/YR25/0420/F - Retention of an existing control building and associated infrastructure, including the adjacent auxiliary transformer and generator, for the continued use by Coldham Solar Farm for the duration of the Solar Farm's operational lifespan - Control Building at Coldham Estate, March Road, Coldham

They resolved to offer no objection.

b) Members noted the following applications:

F/YR25/0401/PNC04 - Change of use from 1 x agricultural building to 2 x dwellings (Class Q (a) and (b)) - Barns 1 and 2, Whitehall Farm, March Road, Tipps End

F/YR25/0402/PNC04 - Change of use from 1 x agricultural building to 2 x dwellings (Class Q (a) and (b)) - Barns 3 and 4, Whitehall Farm, March Road, Tipps End

042/25-26 Finance

a) The management accounts as at 31.5.25 showed income of £11,361.33 and expenditure of £1,740.33, resulting in a surplus of £9,621.00 and total funds held of £47,646.54.

b) Members noted the following sums received since the last meeting:

Recreation Ground Charity (payment received in error)	£	240.00
NatWest Bank (interest)	£	10.12

c) Members ratified the following payment issued since the last meeting:

Recreation Ground Charity (repayment)	£	240.00
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d) Members noted the following card payment:

Asda (refreshments for Annual Parish Meeting)	£	11.78
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e) Members approved the following accounts for payment:

Clerk salary and home office allowance	£	386.91
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f) The Clerk advised Members that he is implementing all of the agreed recommendations from the Internal Auditor's report.

g) The Chairman reported that he had discussed issues relating to the Clerkship of the Council with the Clerk. They will implement fortnightly catch-up calls between meetings. An annual appraisal will be conducted in October. The workload varies from month to month and no alteration to the core hours is proposed at this point. Major projects such as the Nature Park and Village Centre Regeneration may require additional hours, to be agreed at the time. Additional hours to be included in project budgets. He thanked the Clerk for his positive feedback in this process.

043/25-26 Public Time

None.

044/25-26 Matters for Next Meeting

None.

045/25-26 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Parish Council will be Monday 14 July.